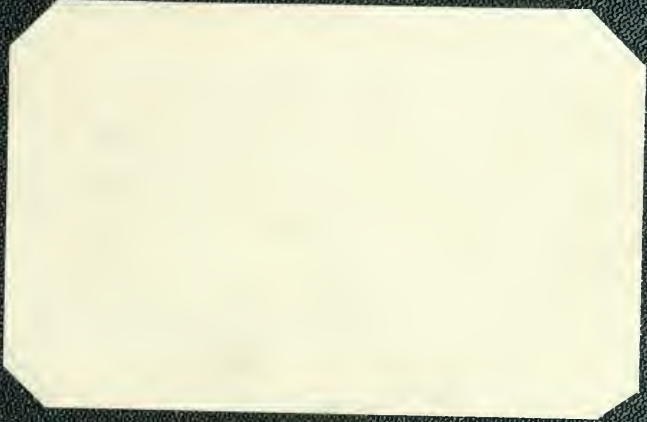


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OUR SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD—ARE THEY NO
LONGER THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR
FELLOW CITIZENS AT HOME?

SPEECH OF COLONEL T. C. H. SMITH.

DELIVERED IN THE COURT HOUSE, AT MARIETTA,

Saturday Evening, Feb. 21, 1863.

COL. SMITH being at home, on his way West, was invited by a number of his fellow-citizens in Marietta, to address the people upon the War and the Condition of the Country. He accepted the invitation, and on Saturday morning, February 21st, public notice was given of the meeting for that evening, in the Court House, at 6½ o'clock. The Court Room was filled to overflowing, the standing places being occupied. Quite a number of ladies graced the meeting with their presence. Col. WM. R. PUTNAM was called to the Chair.

On taking the stand, Col. Smith proceeded in a conversational manner to give some account of the Washington county soldiers whom he had met in the field. He first mentioned Company L, First Ohio Cavalry, a company raised chiefly in Harmar, Marietta, and vicinity, under the command of Capt. T. J. Pattin. It was a very fine company, under fine carbine drill, and Pattin was a superior officer. He excelled in the handling of his men, and in the fighting drill. The fight at Carolina Church, near Corinth, last Spring, was instanced, where Capt. Pattin, with only 48 men of his own and another company, successfully repulsed 250 rebel cavalry, who charged repeatedly upon his command, but after a fight of three quarters of an hour, were driven off by Capt. Pattin's superior skill and tactics and pluck, with a loss of five killed and twenty wounded. Seven only of Capt. Pattin's men were wounded, but not one broke ranks till the fight was over!

Col. Smith then paid flattering tribute to the 39th and 63d Regiments, in which Washington county is strongly represented. He gave full credit to the 77th for its conduct at Shiloh, and paid Col. Hildebrand a very high and deserved compliment for his heroic action. After the battle of Pittsburg Landing, Col. Smith went upon the field, and met a sergeant, who said he belonged to the 12th Illinois, and at once began telling about the battle. This sergeant said: "Our field officers were all gone, when a Col. Hildebrand came along, rallying the men. He gathered up parts of four regiments, and we all fought under Col. Hildebrand the rest of the day." In answer to a question, "Who is Col. Hildebrand?" the sergeant replied, "I don't know to what regiment he belongs, or what State he is from, but I tell you he is the real grit!" [Applause.]

The 36th, Col. Smith first saw at Warrenton Junction, and the sight of the regiment was enough to do the heart of a Washington county man good; no one could see it and not feel the strongest emotions of pride; its drill was extraordinary. Gen. ———, a Regular, and a Mexican war veteran, remarked in his (Smith's) hearing: "That is the best Volunteer Regiment I ever saw."

Col. Smith then proceeded:

Now, what spirit sent these men into the field? That which broke out in the Free States, when the guns of traitors opened against Sumter. That which Democracy

throughout the world felt when it heard resound the first blow struck against its supremacy in this land. The unanimous sentiment that forgot party, thought only of the country, gave men and treasure without stint, and accompanied with millions of acclamations the march of these troops to the field. That sentiment remains among the soldiers *unchanged*—only deepened, confirmed. Have *you* changed? Are we no longer your representatives?

If you have changed, what are your reasons? We desire to know them. The sooner the better. We have looked in vain to your public discussions for any consistent ground of opposition to this war, for anything that will bear the light.

Is it the doctrine of peaceable secession, that treason, assuming the garb of States Rights Democracy, put forth? Is it the right of revolution, or of separate nationality, that a crude radicalism was willing, when the outbreak occurred, to concede, and bid the revolting States go in peace? Has the length or the cost of the war changed you? Has the destruction of slavery, by the application of the laws of war, chilled your ardor?

Let us briefly consider all these:

First, this puerility of peaceable secession. I am a States Rights Democrat of the school of Thomas Jefferson and John Taylor of Caroline. I shall fight under that banner as long as I breathe. I shall always go with those who resist consolidation, who confine the powers of our National Government to the strict letter of its written charter, the Constitution of the United States. I hold that Constitution to have been the work of the people of the several States, and I know that by its terms it is referred to the people of the several States, in conventions or by their Legislatures, for ratification of amendments. From them, in such capacity only, the National Government derives its life. To them, in such capacity, in their capacity as people of the several States, it returns from time to time, to have its life modified, renewed.

But within these limits the National Government is supreme. The States are not interposed between it and the people, in the exercise of its legitimate powers, and cannot be. It constitutes our people, *a nation*. It is as much the direct Government of the people of the States as their State Governments.

And it is *perpetual*. There is no limitation of the duration of our national life; there is no provision for its destruction—only for its renewal, for its duration to the end of time. And woe be to those who would attempt this national life, who would destroy this nation!

These are the cardinal doctrines of States Rights Democracy. There is in them no furtive or sinister glance towards the morbid and suicidal teachings of secession. Firm in their great office of protecting the mass of sovereignty reserved to the States, they yield to the National Government every just support, and their eyes turned steadily upon it in these great hours of its trial, are clear with truth and fidelity.

Let us, however, for the sake of the argument, turn our backs upon it, as traitors and semi-traitors do, looking in every direction but that to which loyalty points. Suppose that the bond between these States is but that of a treaty of amity and commerce between States, as independent as England and France. And is not any attempt to recede from such a treaty prior to its period of limitation, or if perpetual, then at any time, a *casus belli*, a just cause for war? And would it not be the duty of any nation thus injured to punish the breach of faith; and to compel a renewed observance of treaty obligations?

Suppose that the Constitution of the United States is more than a treaty of commerce and amity, and is a treaty of perpetual alliance. Do not the crime of infraction and the cause of war correspondingly increase? Are these not still greater if it amounts to a League? A Confederation?

Certainly you will admit that it is something more than any of these, than *all* these; and if you do, what becomes of peaceable secession? It is an absurdity, a chimera. Turn your backs upon it, and regard it no longer. Cast your looks upon our National Government. Consult your duties in its contemplation. It is more than a treaty, a League, a Confederation. It is a Government. It is your Government and mine. It was made by the people. Its life is their own. They have conferred upon it the right of preservation, if need be, by the stern laws of war. It is treason to resist it. And, while the law acts only on overt treason, beware also of

IN EXCHANGE

that spirit of treason which, if persisted in, will lead to overt acts.

If you wish to study the causes of a pestilence, go to the place where it began. There you will see in naked and apparent force the poisonous influences which originated it, and which elsewhere, though more hidden and not potent enough to have brought it into existence, supply its food and are sufficient to maintain its deadly spread.

Where, then, did the doctrine of secession originate? In the Eastern Parishes of South Carolina. You are aware that the Constitution of that State gives to those Parishes, which are mostly filled by slaves, an undue proportion of the Legislature, and thus constitutes a virtual Aristocracy, enabling it by this property representation to dominate over the much larger white population of the Western portions of the State. The Governor is not elected by popular vote, but by the Legislature. The whole system existing there is the farthest removed from popular government of any in the United States. And the class that rules there, though from the fact of its owning labor allied by interest in certain provinces of Federal legislation with Democracy, has never been so in spirit, and has always shown itself in its State legislation its deadly enemy.

At the beginning of his political career, John C. Calhoun, a man of great intellect, but not regarded by his neighbors as possessed of high courage, contended against this class. He was crushed, and became their supple tool, the defender of their special privileges in the government of his State, the exponent of their ideas, the representative man not only of this aristocratic class in South Carolina, but of all who affiliated with them in other States. He perverted the true doctrines of States Rights, falsely deducing from them principles at variance with those of the fathers, and intended not to check but to destroy our National Government.

It was in these Eastern Parishes that the secession conspiracy, instructed and compacted by the subtle brain of Calhoun, originated. It was there that the first attempt was made to take a State out of the Union, thirty years ago; that attempt which Jackson defeated. It was there that the first gun was fired which began this war; there that a slaveholding Aris-

toocracy began this bloody contest against Democracy.

Neither have the secessionists any proper claim to the right of revolution. Republicans cannot recognize the right to revolutionize a Government of the people, to substitute for it a Government of a class. But if any right of revolution can be found in popular government as such, the obligation that its freedom imposes is such that revolution must only be the last resort, not the first; must wait till the safeguards that conserve the rights of the minority have been successively overleaped, and the offensive measures passed, before its right can accrue. Every right, every privilege, carries with it and imposes a corresponding duty. The corresponding duty to the right and privilege of governmental liberty, is this: that inasmuch as a free government dispenses as far as possible with force, conceding to each individual, and to each minor organization of society within its limits, the largest liberty consistent with the liberty of others, force should only be adopted when all legal resistance has failed. Without this obligation, liberty destroys itself, and is mere anarchy. Of all Governments, republics have the right to be and should be the sternest in the enforcement of such mild political obligations as their laws impose.

Thus the secessionists, by their revolt, not only violated the law, but, tried without the pale of law and by abstract principles, are guilty of the highest of crimes against liberty. They do not pretend that any measure was passed by the General Government impairing their rights under it, and we all remember that the balance of parties, at the time of the outbreak, was such as to make the passage of any such measure *impossible*. If the Democratic party had, by the violence of these secessionists, been demoralized, divided and defeated, there was still a majority in the Senate adverse to the Republicans. The resolutions of the Republicans at Chicago were greatly more moderate in tone and more conservative than those at Philadelphia in the previous Presidential canvass, and the legislative measures in regard to the territories passed, with a Republican majority in Congress, in the winter after Lincoln's election, accorded with the doctrines of the Douglas Democracy rather than with those of the Republican party.

On what, in such a state of things as this, can you base a right of revolution?

Certainly no member of the Democratic party can concede this right to these secessionists. At Charleston we offered them all that our principles would allow us to concede. We said what we would do, and what we would not do. What we would do they declared to be insufficient, and prepared to *draw the sword*. They did more. They endeavored to *defeat* the election of a President by the people, in order the better to inaugurate disorder and rebellion. And they took care that if any President should be elected by the people, it should be the candidate of the Republican party. In view of the legislation in regard to the territories, the preceding winter, and of our attitude at Charleston, the Democratic party, when the secessionists drew the sword, was as thoroughly committed to the war as the bitterest abolitionist in the land. We took our position, and I for one have seen no reason to recede from it.

As regards the right of separate nationality, it can be said to exist only where a nation has had a previous separate existence. The people of this land have always been one in nationality, and we intend with the blessing of God to preserve them so.

Has the length of the war changed your opinion as to its justice and necessity? Has its cost? Is not the true economy to fight it out now, once and for all, and thereby prevent forever its recurrence? Has the strength of the South changed your convictions? Was that your idea, to maintain the Union if treason should prove weak, but to yield its cause should treason prove strong?

It is this military strength of the South, based as it is on slavery, that has made it necessary to choose between Slavery and the Union; and we have decided accordingly that it shall *not* be the Union that shall be destroyed, but *it shall be slavery*.

For one, I anticipated this at the beginning of the war, and expressed to friends the apprehension founded on observation in those States, that the population of the more southern States, whose economical, political, and social system was more exclusively based on slavery, would be found, because of their want of industrial developments, peculiarly disposed to war; that their system of labor would allow them to

place a very large proportion of their numbers in the field; that there would be no slave insurrections to weaken them; and that slavery in those States would have to be broken up, *to preserve the Union*.

My leading in the matter may be imperfect, but I have yet to learn of any formidable or general rising among negro slaves, after being held for a few generations in servitude. The insurrection in Hayti was caused by an attempt to reduce the blacks to slavery after they had been enfranchised by law. It was an insurrection of freemen, not of slaves. Those among us who have such apprehensions of insurrection, will do well to study this instance, and in accordance with their views oppose any attempt to return the slaves of rebels, made free by the late proclamation, to slavery again. They will thus aid in securing us from a reproduction of the bloody scenes of Hayti within our borders.

Why the South can place the bulk of its white population in the field, is easily seen. A few years ago an ingenious book, Helper's "Impending Crisis," was much circulated by some perhaps too willing to blind themselves as to the power of the South. The fallacy of this book lay in this, that it compared the pound crops and various other productions of the North, which represented in great part but the necessary consumption of our climate in excess of the milder Southern latitudes, with the agricultural products of the slave States; and from the very great excess of these upon our side of the balance sheet, inferred an enormous superiority of wealth in the North, whereas wealth is the excess of production over necessary consumption. The hay crop, for instance, the bulk of which with us is necessarily consumed in feeding our stock through long winters, was reported in full in this work. But what difference does it make, in the matter of wealth, whether the grass in the fields has been cut by the scythe, gathered and fed out to the cattle, through the winter months, or whether it is cut by the teeth of the cattle themselves, grazed by them in months in which in a northern climate the fields are bound in frost and snow. Similar reasoning will apply to our root crops and grain.

It requires hardly more than one-third of the labor, to give a white laboring man a comfortable support in the plantation

States on the Gulf, that is necessary on the Lakes. If we consider the essentials of food, clothing, the house and fuel, we shall find that the amount and description of these required in the southern family make their cost less than 40 per cent. of what is needed in the North. The farther south, the more vegetable food and cotton clothing are all that are wanted. The farther north, the more expensive supplies, as meats for food, and woollens for clothing, and these in greater quantity, are required. In the North houses are built solidly, and with a care to resist the rigors of the climate. In the South you often find even wealthy planters living in "mere shells." The ease of living, in short, more than compensates for any enervating influence of the Southern climate on the white. It is from causes growing out of the degradation of labor that the mass of poor whites in the South care little for comforts or refinements, or to accumulate wealth.

It is for these reasons that the enforced labor of the planting States is an enormous source of wealth. An hour or two of the negro's labor per day pays his master the cost of his support. The rest of the ten, twelve, or fifteen hours of his labor, gives the masters their wealth—the incomes from which come the high salaries that the white employees of the South receive, and the dispensation of which makes the owners of slaves the ruling class.

The power of such a social and political system applied in war is at once seen. The slave labor is sufficient to sustain in ease the entire population. Nearly the whole white population, capable of bearing arms, can be put into the field, and with much less violence to its habits than military service brings in the case of a people of high industrial civilization. Had the seceding States half our numbers, had the character of its people less passion and more persistence, it could with its ports open, fight us evenly for many years.

These considerations, while they show us the strength of the rebellion, make it all the more imperative that we put forth all the power that our resources, and the laws of war, give us to prevent its success. They show us what kind of a neighbor we shall have if we allow ourselves to fail.

We must look the power and the character of the system with which we contend in the face, in order to know our duties and

how to perform them. Otherwise we shall fail in a contest with a class which, through years of counseling with a view to this contest, has acquired unity of sentiment and, distinct purposes. They well understand the nature of the struggle. We also must know ourselves and them. The evidences are many and plain, that it was the spread of Democratic sentiment and the impulse towards popular reforms among their own people, which they dreaded most of all, and which they determined to control, by separating themselves from the free people of the North.

The seceding States have thus far in our national history, shown no proficiency—achieved no distinction—in art, in literature, in science, nor in the mechanic arts. Their great men have been statesmen or soldiers only. Their system of labor has cramped their development in all those directions, which belong to a high industrial civilization, and afford a guaranty of peace. The nation they would form would find its pride in war and conquest; its men of genius and talent would seek their career only in diplomacy or arms. The masses of its people would remain what they are proving themselves now, ignorant and willing instruments. We should resist the creation of such a state as strenuously as we would that of a monarchy. Its presence on our border would require the maintenance of an army, whose yearly expenditure would far exceed the interest of any debt we can incur in crushing this rebellion, and would operate to change our republican institutions and imperil our liberties.

But these are not the greatest dangers to be feared. I cannot express my apprehensions in any less degree than by saying at once that it is my deliberate conviction that the contest in which we are engaged is not more a matter of life and death to the South than it is to us; and that we have to-day to choose between *the utter suppression of this rebellion, or an anarchy with a million and a half of men under arms.* Concede a separate existence to the so-called Confederate States, and what would be the result upon the States now united under the National Flag? Can we not read the signs of the times? Are they not so plain that he who runs may read? New combinations of interests, new disruptions must ensue, and wars to which the blood

and burthen of the present are but child's play, wars here at home—war at your doors.

There is one way by which to prevent these evils, to make sure and consolidate all our success as the war proceeds, and that is, to pluck away and destroy the cornerstone of the superstructure these traitors endeavor to raise, and thus prevent forever the possibility of its construction.

It was due to the people of the loyal slave States that a faithful effort should be made to preserve the Union and the *status* of slavery as it existed before the war. And such faithful effort was unquestionably made. As for the rebels they never had any rights in this regard after they drew the sword. The laws of war give the right to decree emancipation, and who will pretend to say that these laws should be more mildly construed and enforced, because we are dealing with traitors in arms? While there is no direct provision in the constitution for emancipation, the war power gives it, and thank God that it does.

Is there, however, one man in this community, is there one man of northern brain and northern heart, bred under free institutions, who will feel no satisfaction, will find it in no sense whatever one of the compensations of this war, if the blood which is poured out so freely to preserve our national unity and vindicate the authority of Republican Government, shall at the same time wipe out from our national escutcheon the stain that has clouded half its bars, and furnished argument to the enemies of freedom in the old world wherewith to decry its friends in the new? Is there one man among us who, whatever may be his doubts, as to the benefit freedom may prove to the black race, is not willing to invoke the blessing of God to go with the boon? If there is one such man, let us pity him!

There is a consequence of emancipation much apprehended, which, if it occur, will certainly belie all experience in regard to the African, viz: that there will be a large influx of negroes into the Northern States. It is certain that heretofore the mass of those that have come among us have been impelled to it by the pressure of slavery in the South. It is not probable one in one hundred of the blacks that have come into the free States would have left the South of choice. The constitution of the black

man impels him *toward* the warm countries, *not* from them. It is certain that some system will prevail in the South, employing black labor. It is certain that the capability of the negro for labor is as inferior to that of the white in a northern climate, as it is superior in a Southern, and that thus as a laborer the negro must seek the South. It is equally certain that if he wishes to live with as little labor as possible, he can live more easily in idleness in a Southern climate than here. All our knowledge of negroes leads us to suppose that so far from their numbers increasing among us as a consequence of the abolition of slavery the contrary may be expected, and that many of those who are now among us, will emigrate Southward, when the opportunity shall be opened for them. Whether all should be confident in this conclusion or not, certain it is, that they are *rash* who are confident of any other!

But whatever may be our opinion as to the expediency of emancipation we are bound as loyal men to sustain it, and *every other lawful measure* which our Government may adopt, to put down this rebellion. I do not, for one, approve of the employment of negro soldiers, but I expect to do what every one should do, yield the measure a loyal support.

Parties should be maintained and their lawful check upon each other is always needed. But no party should be allowed to exist now, or at any time, that is not thoroughly and unmistakably loyal. It is one thing to maintain parties, and another to make them factions, to destroy the Government; it is their healthy office to invigorate and preserve. These may be truisms, but they should be kept in mind. No man should be voted for who is wanting in patriotic and loyal zeal and determination fully to support the Government in all necessary measures, or who countenances disloyalty in others. The bane of free Governments has been party violence, and many of them from this cause have been overthrown. This is a time in which to remember this, and to rise above party and look to the country and that alone.

And this, too, is the time in which to summon up and put in force the qualities of courage and endurance, without which no nation can be great. Wars are more often won by plucky persistence and *game* than by aught else. Jefferson Davis un-

derstands this well, and constantly endeavors to inspire his followers with this spirit. In a late speech he declared that the South had endured for a year unflinchingly the severest pressure of war, but that the North when at length it feels the pressure, at the first touch of the gaff, shows a disposition to fly the ring! Do any of you feel this taunt? Have any of you felt this disposition? Washington county was first settled by soldiers of the Revolution, and she has never failed yet to respond to the wants of the country in men and means.— Sons of the men of 1812! Grandsons of the men of the Revolution! Is it you who will fail now? The sacrifices that they made are we not ready to repeat? It is the divine law that all strength and purity of character can only be acquired by sacrifice. The life of nations is not in this respect different from the life of individual men. Every trial our people endure, every sacrifice we make, will be returned to us as a nation a thousand fold.

We have considered here, to-night, the power of the South, and our dangers, and have endeavored to look these fully in the face. Let us now, before separating, look at some of the grounds of encouragement.

And first, let us remember that all wars of any magnitude are filled with varying success and failure, and at intervals with great discouragement. It is the boast of England that she is ready to begin fighting when those who contend with her are ready to quit. In all her wars she has begun with blunders and failure. She has succeeded nearly always in the end by her great qualities of courage and endurance. Success in war is a question of physical and moral exhaustion: physical exhaustion by the loss of men and material; moral exhaustion by the demoralization of defeat.

We have acquired a large portion of the territory of the seceding States; but that we have no more, proves nothing against our speedy success. Russia became exhausted at Sebastopol, and made an ignominious peace, when the allies had hardly penetrated a day's ride into her territory.

The rebels are now for the first time, since their conscription, feeling sorely the need of men. I am informed by Southern Union men, well able to judge, that the seceding population had not in all at the beginning of the war to exceed 500,000 men

that could do service in the field, and that at this time they have not to exceed 250,000 effective men in the Confederate armies. Their States have an enrolled force, corresponding with our home guards, or three months' men, for service in the protection of their cities on the coast, and for police; but these are of little avail to bear the brunt of the war.

Again the rebels now feel for the first time the full operation of the blockade in depriving them of war supplies. They had at the beginning, as has any country, in the shops and storehouses of their merchants and in their homes supplies of cloths and leather on hand sufficient, perhaps, for a year. These were appropriated in great part for their armies in the field and are now consumed. They are almost out of leather and woolsens; and without these, troops cannot be maintained in the field without great loss from sickness by exposure. The occasional passage of a vessel through the blockade cannot prove sufficient to maintain great armies in the field.

We must remember, too, that the reactionary influence among us is corresponded to by a reactionary spirit among them. The revolt in Northern Georgia and the mountain portions of North Carolina, are but the beginning of what must more and more curb the power of the rebellion, as its military strength wanes. The intercepted dispatches and letters of the rebel leaders to their emissaries in Europe, and those between their generals, and all we know of them, seem to indicate that their strength has passed its culminating point, while ours, as we know, but begins to culminate. Those who know the character of the people of the seceding States, know that the rebellion when it ends will probably end as suddenly as it began. A single great Union victory would, to-day, cause it to tremble throughout with throes of dissolution.

But let us still look to our own strength and determination for success, for it is impossible that they can long maintain their unholy cause if we put forth our power and persevere.

And, my friends, to conclude, if we cannot attain success, let us at least deserve it. If we are to yield, if we are to behold a new nation established on this Continent with slavery as its corner stone, with its people in ignorance, and wielded by the

strong hand of a military aristocracy for purposes of aggression and conquest, and in turbulent and formidable and eternal antagonism with the free industrial democracy who have supposed that this land was a heritage given them of God; if this must be, let not you nor I be found in the number of those who did not exert all their influence and all their powers to prevent it. When our soldiers return, what will be their feeling towards these men, who, having first joined in the millions of acclamations which attended their march to the field, then turned against them, decried their motives, sneered at their efforts, had only denunciations of the war and complaints of its burthens, discouraged enlistments, encouraged desertions, knelt to armed treason, offered tribute to it, invited its rule, and only rose from this despicable attitude when it had utterly spurned their abject proffer. What the feeling of our volunteers will be you may discern now, as you see them in the field, turning to send one curse back upon the traitors at home before grasping their muskets to march against the traitors in their front.

May God change the hearts of these men, inspire them again with loyalty, patriotism, and that spirit of sacrifice in favor of freedom which can alone make worthy of it. But if they will not change,

if they will still persist in aiding the enemies of our national life—the enemies of human progress itself—then I pray equally that by some means, by any means, they may in the vengeance of God be driven from our borders—yes, if need be, scourged from the face of the earth. And I tell you that the one sole satisfaction there is in looking forward to the troubles they would bring upon us, is that when they begin their treasonable work openly we shall at least be able to get at them with arms in our hands. I would rather to-day fight them than fight the rebels who follow Jefferson Davis. They, at least, are true to a bad cause. These men are true to no cause, and can be true to none. They are pure gangrene on the body politic, for which the sharpest are the only remedies—caustic and steel. Apply the caustic whenever they show a disloyal symptom, and stand always ready, if violated law require it, to give them the steel!

[In our report, the "cheers," "applause," &c., are left out, but the audience often made manifestations of great satisfaction; otherwise there was almost breathless silence. At the close three thundering cheers were given "for Col. Smith," and three "for the army."—Ed. Reg.]

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